

NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND).

RETURN to an Order of the Honourable the House of Commons,
dated 31st May, 1905:—for,

COPY of Minutes of the Proceedings of the Commissioners of National
Education relating to Rule 127 (b) of their Code of Regulations.

(*Mr. Walter Long.*)

Ordered, by THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, to be printed,
31st May, 1905.

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1905.

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF
NATIONAL EDUCATION RELATING TO RULE 127 (b) AND
COGNATE RULES.

EXTRACT from Minutes of Board, 9th June, 1903 :—

"After discussion, it is proposed by the Bishop of Killaloe and unanimously adopted by the Board :—

That the Resident Commissioner be hereby requested at his earliest convenience to bring before the Board a report on the excessive expenditure incurred by the multiplication of small schools, and to prepare a resolution on the question."

EXTRACT from Minutes of Board, 27th April, 1904 :—

"The draft letter to the Irish Government in reply to the Under Secretary's letter of the 25th March last, is considered and amended.

It is ordered to be sent to the Under Secretary ; being first printed and circulated amongst the members of the Board."

Extract from the draft of the letter to the Under Secretary :—

"*Instruction.*—The existence of a considerable number of small schools, many of which have been transferred from other organisations, has long been a matter of concern to the Commissioners, and various suggestions for reducing this number have been considered. Some of these schools were taken into connection with the Board under the provisions of Rule 91 (a) to meet the wants of minorities in regard to religious instruction. Others are situated in remote or isolated localities where there are no other schools for the very sparse population, and were recognised by the Board when the population was greater. There is, however, a considerable number of schools and departments reported by Inspectors as unnecessary that might be abolished or amalgamated without disadvantage. To facilitate amalgamation the Commissioners submitted certain proposals to the Government (5th February, 1904), including, *inter alia*, a scheme by which, in the event of amalgamation, the existing teachers would be retained without loss of income, but his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, on the 1st March following, stated that 'it would be premature to bring the question before the Treasury' then. In paragraph 125 Mr. Dale urges the 'disastrous consequence' of the sub-division of schools into boys' and girls' schools on the instruction of boys from three to seven years of age. The Commissioners have always given facilities for the instruction of boys of tender years by mistresses, and they specially recognise mistresses as teachers of infant boys' schools (Rule 185 (c)). There are two possible methods of remedying the unsatisfactory condition of things criticised by Mr. Dale, viz. : (1) by insisting on the transfer of all boys between three and seven to girls' schools; or (2) by the amalgamation of senior boys' and girls' departments, and by the creation of more infants' departments or schools. The difficulties in the way of these solutions are the loss of salary and possible loss of situation to teachers in the schools from which the pupils are transferred. The problem might also be solved, though not in the most economical way, by the employment of manual instructresses in boys' schools, and a proposal on this subject has already been submitted to the Government, or by an extension of the rule under which manual instructresses are at present engaged, so as to permit of their employment in two or more adjoining schools. The latter proposal is at present under consideration."

EXTRACT FROM Minutes of Board, 25th October, 1904 :—

"The Resident Commissioner's proposals are considered and discussed one by one.

1. That in order to assist in teaching junior standards in boy's schools where the average attendance warrants the employment of an assistant, a mistress be allowed.

Adopted.

2. That boys under eight years of age be ineligible for enrolment in a boys' school where there is not a woman teacher, unless there be no suitable school under a mistress available in the locality.

Adopted as above.

3. That separate ordinary schools for boys and girls adjoining or in close proximity, and under the same management, in one or both of which there is an average attendance of less than thirty, be amalgamated on the retirement of either principal, unless for special reasons it shall be otherwise directed.

Adopted as above—Sir Henry Bellingham, Mr. Molloy, and Mr. Harrington dissenting.

4. That in the case of applications for the recognition of boys' and girls' schools in the same locality in place of a mixed school aid be not granted to separate schools for boys and girls unless there be satisfactory evidence that each school will have an average attendance of at least fifty pupils.

Adopted as above—Mr. Molloy dissenting.

5. That a grant of salary and books be not made to a school under the terms of Rule 91 (b.) unless it be reported by the Inspector that there is a prospect of an annual average of twenty being maintained.

Postponed.

6. That in the case of a vacancy in a school under Protestant management with an average daily attendance of under twenty-five and within two miles distance of one or more schools under the management of any Protestant denomination, a new teacher be not appointed until the Commissioners have considered a re-arrangement of schools in the district. A similar rule to apply in the case of schools under Roman Catholic management.

Adopted as above.

7. That if the building in which a school is conducted is unsuitable a new school to replace the old one be not provided until the Commissioners shall have considered the question of its necessity, having regard to the school accommodation already provided in the locality.

Adopted as above.

8. That in cases of applications for building grants for adjoining boys' and girls' schools, grants for separate schools be not made unless there be an average attendance of at least fifty pupils in each school.

Adopted.

EXTRACT from Minutes of Board of 14th March, 1905.

"The Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin calls attention to new rule 127(b), and asks for an authoritative interpretation of the expression 'suitable school,' which occurs in the rule.

After consideration, the following resolution is unanimously adopted on the motion of the Resident Commissioner:—

Rule 127(b).

A 'suitable' school should be taken as meaning a school in which there is adequate accommodation of a satisfactory kind, in which the teaching of infants is efficient, and in which the teaching staff is of the same religious denomination as in the neighbouring boys' school.

The case in which a boys' school under two teachers would lose an assistant, will, on the application of the manager, be specially considered.

Boys over seven years of age who are fit to be enrolled in the second standard may be transferred to a boys' school."

EXTRACT from Minutes of Board of 28th March, 1905.

"The Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin expresses his intention to move at next meeting of the Board, that:—

'All schools upon which the effect of rule 127 (b) would be to impair the strength of the teaching staff, to reduce the salaries of existing teachers, or to turn "separate" into "mixed" schools, shall be exempt from its operation, until the Commissioners provide some means of obviating these objectionable results.

'That the age limit of said rule be reduced to seven."

EXTRACT from Minutes of Board of 11th April, 1905:—

"NOTICE of MOTION.—The Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin will move that—

'All schools upon which the effect of rule 127(b) would be to impair the strength of the teaching staff, to reduce the salaries of existing teachers, or to turn "separate" into "mixed" schools, shall be exempt from its operation, until the Commissioners can provide some means of obviating these objectionable results.

'That the age limit of said rule be reduced to seven.'

(a.) Memorandum of Chief Inspectors.

(Copy sent to each Commissioner).

(b.) Memoranda of Mr. Stronge, Senior Inspector.

(Copy sent to each Commissioner).

(c.) Memorandum of Mr. Naish, Accountant.

(Copy sent to each Commissioner).

(d.) Extract from Treasury letter of 14th March, 1905, to the Under Secretary, Dublin Castle, relative to the question of the amalgamation of small schools and separate departments of schools.

(Copy sent to each Commissioner)

The Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin calls attention to the definition of 'suitable school,' which was adopted by the Board on 14:3:05, and proposes:—

'That inasmuch as the two Chief Inspectors of the Board agree in describing as "woefully unsatisfactory" the provision made for infants in existing schools except where there are specially equipped infants' departments, no school under a mistress is to be regarded as "suitable" in the sense of rule 127(b), unless it contains such a department.'

After discussion, a vote is taken on the proposal, with the following result:—

For.	Against.
Mr. Molloy.	The Lord Chief Baron.
The Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin.	Rev. Dr. Evans.
	Sir Rowland Blennerhassett.
	Rev. Dr. Wilson.
	Mr. Harrington.
	The Bishop of Killaloe.
	The Resident Commissioner.
	Mr. Justice Gibson.
	The Provost of Trinity College.
	Rev. Dr. Taylor.
	Lord Killanin.
	Mr. Gwynn.
	Major Dease.

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Mr. Morell does not vote; and Sir Henry Bellingham has left before the division.

The motion is accordingly not carried.

The Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin states that he proposes to subdivide the motion standing in his name.

He moves:—

That the following addition be made to Rule 127 (b) :—

‘No school shall suffer the loss of an assistant, owing to the operation of this rule.’

Subsequently the Bishop withdraws this amendment in favour of the following amendment, proposed by the Lord Chief Baron:—

‘That between “ineligible” and “for” insert “without the special permission of the Commissioners.”’

And at the end of the sub-rule add:—

‘This special permission will not be granted except in cases in which, in the opinion of the Commissioners, the probable effect of this sub-rule will be the loss of an assistant teacher to the school. This permission will be withdrawn on the occurrence of a vacancy on the staff of assistants, when an assistant mistress may be appointed under Rule 86 (d).’

This resolution is put to the Board, and is carried unanimously.

The Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin then moves:—

‘That any school upon which the effect of Rule 127 (b) would be to reduce the salary of an existing teacher shall be exempt from the operation of that rule during such teacher’s tenure of office.’

After discussion a vote is taken as follows:—

For.	Against.
Mr. Morell.	The Lord Chief Baron.
Rev. Dr. Evans.	Sir Rowland Blennerhassett.
Mr. Molloy.	Rev. Dr. Wilson.
The Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin.	Mr. Harrington.
Major Dease.	The Bishop of Killaloe.
	The Resident Commissioner.
	Mr. Justice Gibson.
	The Provost of Trinity College.
	Rev. Dr. Taylor.
	Lord Killanin.
	Mr. Gwynn.

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The motion is accordingly lost.

The Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin next moves :—

‘That any school which, independently of rule 127 (b), would not come under the operation of either rule 186 or 194 shall be exempt from the operation of rule 127 (b) until the Commissioners provide some means of obviating that result.’

A discussion takes place, which is not concluded when the hour for adjournment arrives, and it is ordered :—

‘That further consideration of the proposal be postponed until next meeting of the Board.’—

EXTRACT from Minutes of the Board of 28th April, 1905.—

“I. Motion of the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, postponed from last Board meeting :—

(a) ‘That any school which independently of rule 127 (b), would not come under the operation of either rule 186 or 194, shall be exempt from the provisions of rule 127 (b) until the Commissioners provide some means of obviating that result.’

(b) ‘That age limit of said rule be reduced to seven.’

The Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin moves (a) in the following amended form :—

To add to rule 186 the words :—

‘This rule shall not apply to any boys’ school, the average attendance of which, but for the operation of rule 127 (b) would, in the opinion of the Commissioners, be over thirty.’

After discussion the Resident Commissioner expresses his willingness to assent to the Most Rev. Dr. Foley’s motion, as a compromise, provided it be understood that the adoption of the Motion by the Board :—

- (1.) Will enable his Lordship to accept Rule 127(b) without further amendment ;
- (2.) Will so far satisfy the Roman Catholic Hierarchy and managers that they will abandon their opposition to Rule 127(b.)

The Most Rev. Dr. Foley states that he is prepared to accept Rule 127(b) without further amendment, provided that the age limit be reduced to seven years.

As to (2) the Most Rev. Dr. Foley states that in his opinion the Motion, if adopted, would go some way to obviate the objections of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy and clerical managers, and that, so far as his influence went, he would exert it to obviate these objections.

The Board being satisfied with these assurances, the Bishop’s motion is adopted *unanimis dissentiente*.

The Most Rev. Dr. Foley then proposes :—

‘That the age limit of Rule 127(b) be reduced to seven years.’

This is unanimously agreed to by the Board, and it is ordered accordingly.

II.—Notice of Motion.

The Provost of Trinity College will move :—

‘That where a boys’ school and a girls’ school are under the same management, there being no separate infants’ school, the manager may, with the consent of the Board’s Inspector,

divide both schools into senior and junior departments, and may amalgamate the junior departments in such manner as to provide that all the infants, boys and girls, shall be taught by a mistress in the girls' school, and that a transfer of girls enrolled in the second and third standards shall be made to the boys' school, so that the normal average attendance at each school may be maintained as far as possible.'

The Provost withdraws his motion.

III—Notice of Motion. The Resident Commissioner will move:—

That after 30th June next no pupil under five years of age completed may be newly enrolled, or re-enrolled, in a National School unless such school has been certified by the Board's Inspector as affording adequate means for the suitable instruction of infants. A school cannot be regarded as affording adequate means for the instruction of infants unless it has—

- '(1.) A separate room properly fitted up and equipped for such instruction;
- '(2.) Suitable closets and covered playshed;
- '(3.) A properly qualified teacher or manual instructress free to attend solely to these babies during at least half their school time.

'Permission to enrol pupils under five years of age will be withdrawn from National Schools in which suitable infant instruction is not maintained.

'That Rule 127 (d) be modified by adding:—

'Unless a Registrar's or a baptismal certificate is produced.'

The Resident Commissioner withdraws his motion."

EXTRACT from Minutes of the Board of 9th May, 1905.

"The Resident Commissioner moves that:—

- 'When two separate schools, for boys and girls respectively, are amalgamated, the Manager shall have the option of the teachers being paid as the teaching staff of a single school under the existing rules, with the special guarantee of security from reduction of salary of the assistant contained in the Treasury letter of the 14th March;

or,

of having the schoolmaster and schoolmistress dealt with financially as two principal teachers, the master's payment and promotion to be limited and determined by the number in attendance of the boys, and, similarly, the mistress's payment and promotion to be determined and limited by the number in attendance of the girls.

- 'These arrangements, which are intended to safeguard the interests of the mistress, apply only so long as she remains in the school, and on her ceasing to be a member of the staff the school must come under the ordinary financial rules.'

The Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin objects to the alternative proposal, owing to its possible effect of furthering amalgamation, and the Resident Commissioner withdraws this part of his motion.

After discussion it is ordered, in connection with the first part of the motion—

‘That in cases of amalgamation of boys’ and girls’ schools the master be paid residual capitation grant for the boys, and the mistress for the girls, so long as the mistress remains in the school.’

The following statement, made by the Most Rev. Dr. Folsy, is ordered to be recorded on the Minutes:—

‘The Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin said that, in accordance with the undertaking which he had given at the last meeting of the Board, he had brought before the Standing Committee of the Bishops the amendments of Rules 186 and 127 (b), which had been passed at that meeting, and that their Lordships desired him to say that they heard with satisfaction of the action which he had taken towards amending Rules 186 and 127 (b); but that since these rules were part of a large scheme of amalgamation of boys’ and girls’ schools, to which they (the Bishops) had insuperable objections on moral grounds, they would feel it their duty to oppose them by every legitimate means in their power, and they requested the Bishop to convey to the Commissioners their conviction that the whole question of amalgamation would have to be reconsidered by the Board.’

Copies of the Memoranda and extract from Treasury letter referred to in the Minutes of the 11th April, 1905, are appended.

P. E. LEMASS, }
W. J. DILWORTH, } *Secretaries.*

OFFICE OF NATIONAL EDUCATION,
DUBLIN, 22nd June, 1905.

Rule 127 (b).

MEMORANDUM OF CHIEF INSPECTORS.

The object of this rule, the improved training of infants, commends itself to all. Two advantages will be gained by the operation of the rule—infant boys will be placed in charge of mistresses (their most suitable instructors), and the infant classes will be made larger by bringing boys and girls together, and thus more efficient training will be rendered possible.

Except in specially equipped infants’ departments our provision for the training of infants has been woefully unsatisfactory. In one-teacher schools this has been particularly the case. Engrossed with the instruction of the older pupils, the teacher has had little time to attend to these young folk. Very often he entrusts them to a monitor, or occasionally to a pupil not much more advanced than themselves. But generally they are left unnoticed and unemployed (because suitable employment would render supervision necessary.) They are, however, obliged to keep quiet, repressing all the natural restlessness of childhood. How long the day must seem to them! No wonder that their faces wear a look of ennui. Better far to have these children disporting themselves in the open air than sitting thus idly in the heated atmosphere of a schoolroom. Such treatment has a very stupefying effect. To bring together the small contingents of boys and girls hitherto taught in different schools, as Rule 127 (b) proposes, seems the only feasible way out of the difficulty.

Their numbers taken separately may be insignificant, whereas when combined they might be large enough to warrant their having a teacher to themselves and (a most desirable arrangement) a room to themselves.

Amongst the host of critics who have been lately discussing the new Regulation, hardly any ventured to dispute, what is really incontestable, that children of very tender age (boys as well as girls) can be better looked after by the average Mistress than by the average Master. A woman is more likely to have the sympathy and patience which they so much need.

Unfortunately the path of reform is beset with many difficulties. Notwithstanding the elaborate safeguards devised by the Commissioners, viz. :—

- (1.) The girls' schools in question must be suitable.
- (2.) They must have Teachers of the same Religious Denomination as the neighbouring Boys' School.
- (3.) No school having a staff of only two teachers shall suffer the loss of Assistant owing to operation of Rule.
- (4.) In cases of amalgamation of boys' and girls' schools, both Principals retain the salaries which they enjoyed prior to change :

many Masters profess to think that the new Rule spells ruin for them. Their alarm, though not quite groundless, is certainly exaggerated. In Boys' Schools, with an average attendance of above 50, a Female Assistant can be appointed. Then it will be allowable to retain the Infants, and the Principal's Grade Salary will not be affected. Again, the Treasury has been asked to allow Manual Instructresses in small mixed schools under a Master, with an average attendance of from 34 to 50. Here, also, vested interests will be in no way prejudiced.

A curious idea has sprung up that the Treasury will reap some benefit from the change, and that the Commissioners had this object in making the new Rule. It would be impossible to say, without an elaborate calculation (even then it would only be a rough approximation), how the matter will work out; but in all probability at first, and for a considerable period, an increased expenditure will be entailed. In cases of amalgamation of boys' and girls' schools, as already mentioned, both Principals will retain their salaries. There is no gain to the Treasury here. The Male Principal, in such a case, will be eligible for a higher salary under Rule 104. This may lead to a noticeable increase in expenses.

Boys' and Girls' Schools may, on amalgamation, be turned into mixed Junior and mixed Senior Departments, and in this case salary would be paid to a Manual Instructress for the Senior Department. This, too, may entail a considerable addition to the estimates.

The interests of the pupils (which Rule 127 (b) tends to promote) should be regarded as of paramount importance. At times the children are moved like pawns on a chess-board, in order to adjust the average so as to secure salary for an Assistant Teacher. It has repeatedly happened that Infants were admitted for this purpose to Senior Schools (Boys' and Girls') although a special Infants' Department was attached.

It is a mistake to imagine that the policy embodied in Rule 127 (b) is of recent growth. Again and again, for years past, the existing arrangements for the instruction of Infants have been condemned by the Inspectors in their Reports, and so far back as June, 1903, the Senior Inspectors in Conference recommended that, wherever practicable, boys under eight years of age should be taught by a Mistress.

As regards the danger on moral grounds of boys and girls being taught together, the idea in the case of Infants is preposterous; and we may mention that although there are in operation no less than 4,455 mixed Schools (2,247 being Roman Catholic) having Senior Classes, within our very lengthened experience no abuse resulting therefrom has ever come under our notice.

A. PURSER, }
J. J. HYNES, } *Chief Inspectors.*

4th April, 1905.

Rule 127 (b).

MEMORANDUM BY MR. STRONGE, SENIOR INSPECTOR.

This rule appears for the first time promulgated in definite terms in the present Code, but for the last thirty years, at least, both managers, inspectors, and teachers have been recommending, and in many instances attempting to gain for the schools, the educational advantages which the Rule will finally make universal. In the Convent schools, boys have always been admitted and taught up to nine years of age. Infants' schools have been established not only in the cities and towns, but also in villages in which boys were retained until nine years of age—and even till ten years of age by a regulation of three years ago. But not only were boys taught in Convent and infants' schools under mistresses, but in the case of boys' and girls' separate schools, managers were permitted to enrol boys under seven years of age in the girls' schools—a privilege of which they on educational grounds frequently availed themselves. These facts are sufficient to show what the general opinion was as to the advantages to be gained by having boys in their earlier years under the training and instruction of women. Long before the discontinuance of Results examinations, the attention of the Commissioners was drawn to the insufficient attention paid to the training of infants especially in boys' schools. As a consequence instructions were issued that the infants' class in every school should be prepared in two exercises, e.g., ball-frame, singing, drill, Kindergarten, &c., in addition to the usual reading test in order to qualify for a full 'pass' and to earn the full fee per unit for the teacher. The Revised Programme of 1901 prescribes Kindergarten, Drill, Singing, and Object Lessons for the first standard in all schools. It will thus be seen that the proper training and instruction of infants have not been lost sight of by the managers and the Commissioners. But notwithstanding regulations and circulars the training of infants in boys' schools was still reported by the inspectors as unsatisfactory. Kindergarten was very rarely taught, the singing was seldom good—a master being a very unsuitable pattern for small boys to imitate—little attention was paid to training the boys to good habits, the teachers took little interest in so young children, and there were wanting brightness and animation both in teachers and taught. So deeply were the inspectors impressed by the failure of masters to train young boys successfully that in July, 1903, the senior inspectors (22) unanimously made the following recommendations:—

"Wherever practicable, boys under eight years of age should be under the charge of a mistress."

"In order to assist in teaching junior standards, a female assistant might be allowed in a boys' school under a master."

"The teachers in mixed schools with an average of 35 and under should be women."

Again in April, 1904, the senior inspectors in conference made the following recommendation:—

"Where a small boys' school and a small girls' school are held in adjoining rooms in the same building, it is desirable that boys and girls of the lower standards be taught in the school conducted by the mistresses, and that boys and girls of the higher standards be taught in the school conducted by the master."

These recommendations were made by the senior inspectors solely in the interests of efficiency and in their desire to improve education.

Mr. Dale quite concurs with their views. He states, p. 37—

124. "This sub-division is also most objectionable on educational grounds. In a mixed school of (say) sixty children taught by two teachers, one teacher can devote his undivided time to the instruction of the older children, the other to the younger; but when the school is split up into two separate apartments of thirty boys and thirty girls, each teacher has to take both older and younger with the natural result of interrupting the continuity and impairing the efficiency of his work."

125. "The most disastrous consequence of this sub-division is its effect on the instruction of the boys from three to seven years of age, who are separated from the girls of corresponding age and placed under the master. If there is any point of agreement among all interested in education, it is that a man both by temperament and training is unfitted to teach infants, and that the charge of them should be entrusted to women. Yet the prevailing organisation of a large number of schools in Ireland exhibits an absolute disregard of this elementary consideration; and the consequence I found to be, that in nearly all the small boys' schools that I visited the instruction of the infants was unsuitable and ineffective. They were frequently neglected altogether while the master taught the older scholars; nor can it reasonably be expected that a man should possess the patience or sympathy with very young children which are natural to even an unskilled woman teacher, and which are the indispensable pre-requisites for any successful teaching of infants."

In the "Notes for Teachers" issued in this month last year, under the head, "The Training and Teaching of Infants," it is stated that "In the case of boys' and girls' schools adjoining each other the boys under seven years should be enrolled in the girls' school and taught by a mistress."

In the Commissioners' Report for 1903, page 6, it is stated that "there is a considerable number of schools and departments reported by the Inspectors as unnecessary, or that might be amalgamated without disadvantage," and the Commissioners "propose two possible methods of remedying this unsatisfactory state of things (viz., the 'disastrous consequences' to education due to the sub-division of schools into boys' and girls' schools) viz., (1), by insisting on the transfer of all boys between three and seven to girls' schools, or (2), by the amalgamation of senior boys' and girls' departments, and by the creation of more infants' departments or schools."

It should now be quite plain that the rule has not been hastily adopted but has been introduced with the sole object of increasing the efficiency of the training of infant boys.

To pass now to the operation of the rule. It does not come into operation until the beginning of the educational year, July 1st, 1905. The effect of the rule will not be to transfer, on that date, any boys from a boys' to a girls' school. As it refers only to new enrolments of boys under eight years who come to school for the first time, it will operate very slowly, and thus allow time for alterations in buildings and re-adjustment of the staffs of the schools.

There will be very many schools altogether unaffected by its operation. The following are cases in which its operation will be limited:—

(1). Boys under eight years of age need not be excluded from boys' schools where there is no assistant mistress, unless there is a "suitable" school under a mistress in the locality.

(2). A "suitable" school means a school in which there is adequate accommodation of a satisfactory kind, in which the teaching of infants is efficient, and in which the teaching staff is one of the same religious denomination as in the neighbouring boys' school.

(3). Boys of seven years of age may be enrolled in boys' schools where there is no mistress, if they have attained the qualifications for the second standard.

(4). In case a two-teacher school would lose the service of an assistant by the application of the rule the Commissioners will specially consider the case on a representation of the manager.

By this interpretation of the rule and the limitations of its application thus defined, it will be seen that its operation will practically be confined to small boys' and girls' schools adjoining or within easy reach of each other. It is absolutely necessary that some steps should be taken to raise the efficiency of these schools. Schools with a low average attendance (of 35 or under) are the most inefficient schools, as a rule, in the whole country. The causes of this inefficiency have been given above in a quotation from Mr. Dals's Report. The only means of raising these schools to a standard of efficiency

is by combining the schools and thus allowing of a division of labour between the teachers. By this arrangement there is certain to be a gain to the children and no loss to the teachers, for the teacher who becomes an assistant in the combined school will retain her present salary, while the principal will be eligible for promotion to a higher grade owing to the increased average attendance, e.g., where there are two schools, each having an average of 25 or 26, the master receiving maximum third grade salary, £77, and the mistress also maximum third grade salary, £65, the combined salary would be £142. If the schools were amalgamated the mistress, as assistant, would still retain her present salary, while the principal's salary might rise to £127. Even if a new assistant came in at £44 per annum, the combined school would cost more than the two separate schools. The same comparison will apply with even greater force to the amalgamation of two schools whose combined average reaches 70. Thus, amalgamation, while certain to increase efficiency, will, with equal certainty, be more expensive. It cannot be too often repeated that considerations of expenditure had nothing to do with the passing of the rule. If such consideration had been a factor, the rule would never have been passed. A much simpler and less expensive proceeding would have been not to interfere with the existing small double schools until the steady decline in the average attendance which is occurring in all parts of the country had reached such a minimum as to enable the Commissioners to strike one of the two schools off the roll. In that event the teacher might have had to retire without a pension, and could only be succeeded by a manual instructress.

It is obvious that the managers and teachers, if they have at heart the interests of the children, can do much to forward those interests by co-operating with the Commissioners in carrying the rule into effect.

(Signed), S. E. STRONGE,
Senior Inspector.

3/4/05.

MEMORANDUM OF MR. STRONGE ON THE AMALGAMATION OF SMALL SCHOOLS.

In schools with an average under fifty it is only a teacher of exceptional skill and ability who can succeed in maintaining such a school in a state of efficiency. There are six or seven classes with different programmes in every subject and the number of subjects is eleven. The problem is to keep all classes profitably employed, and the usual method of doing so hitherto has been to employ pupils of third standard to instruct those of first standard, and pupils of fifth and sixth standards to instruct those of third and so on. It is not unusual in such a school to see three drafts of children standing in semi-circles facing one of the walls of the school-room under the instruction of three other pupils, and this occurs every half hour during the day except while Drawing and Singing are being taught. It is the old Bell and Lancaster system—a system whose aim was economy rather than careful instruction and training. This style of teaching was successful enough under the Results system, in which the memory was developed and cultivated at the expense of all the other faculties. And it is because mechanical teaching and memorizing are of so little value under the present programme that the small school under one teacher hopelessly fails. Unskilled assistance, such as that of pupils, actually does harm now.

There are, unfortunately, over 5,000 schools in Ireland, each under one teacher. There are many of these—small mixed schools at a considerable distance from other schools—which must be retained as they are, and for an improvement in their efficiency little hope can be entertained. There are again many superfluous schools both in towns and rural districts in the North of Ireland. There are eight schools in Magherafelt (population 1,400), seven in Ballycastle (population 1,400), nine in Limavady (population 2,692), and fifteen in the Trillick district (population 4,385). Many of these schools could be amalgamated with one another, much to the advantage of both teachers and pupils, and without injury to the interests of any denomination. Nearly all these schools,

whether in town or country, are mixed schools, but by being combined into larger schools a greater division and combination of labour would be possible, thus rendering the work of the teacher lighter and increasing the efficiency of the instruction and training. There remains to be considered the case of small separate schools for boys and girls adjoining or near to each other. These are chiefly to be found in the south-west of Ireland and are, with very few exceptions, under Roman Catholic management. Both departments suffer from the disadvantages and difficulties already referred to as incident to small mixed schools under a single teacher. But in these cases a simple and obvious remedy is possible by which greater efficiency can be easily secured, viz. :—to combine the two schools under the master as principal and the mistress as assistant. In the combined school the master will teach the senior classes and the mistress the junior classes, and needlework to the girls. In most cases the only structural change required will be the opening of a door between the present two schoolrooms. Where the rooms are above each other or a short distance apart, a junior and senior school will be the best arrangement. The mistress will then dismiss her school at 2 o'clock p.m. and proceed to the senior department to teach needlework. This co-education of the sexes is, in my opinion, after thirty years' experience, a decided advantage to both boys and girls. The best schools I have ever inspected, whether in the north or south of Ireland, have been large mixed schools. The best country schools I have ever seen were the schools in the County Clare, and most of these were mixed schools. There are 2,247 mixed schools in Ireland under Catholic management. Of these there are 79 in Clare, 225 in Donegal, 167 in Galway, and 166 in Mayo. It cannot be said, therefore, that there is anything like unanimity amongst Catholic managers as to the moral dangers arising from the co-education of boys and girls. I do not imagine for a moment that the standard of purity of morals amongst our boys and girls is lower than it is in England. Upon this point Mr. Dale observes, p. 48, paragraph 153 (iii.) "It should, however, be observed that in some parts of Ireland Roman Catholic managers object to mixed schools as a possible danger to morality. I was not able to obtain any specific facts in support of this belief, nor does English experience in rural districts lend any colour to it."

As an instance of the success of a mixed school a few years ago a return was prepared in the Education Office of the numbers of clergymen, lawyers, doctors, civil servants and teachers educated at Coonaclear National School, County Clare. I do not recollect the exact number but there were over one hundred. A few days ago Canon O'Neill, P.P., of Killanorin, Gorey, asked me if I knew the County Clare and if I could tell him what sort of schools there were there. I described them to him. He then told me that a gentleman whom he knew in the War Office had written to him that many of the clerks in the office were from Clare, and that they said they owed their present positions to the excellence of the primary education they received in its schools. The same gentleman urged Canon O'Neill to use every effort to obtain good teachers for his schools.

While the Catholics of the south and west of Ireland can, owing to their numbers, secure efficiency by certain re-arrangements, the case of the Protestant schools is different. They are small, and in spite of endowments cannot hope to attract the best teachers. They are, therefore, heavily handicapped both in the quality of their teachers and in the difficulty such teachers will have to contend with in teaching without assistance a few children in every class. Unless one taught small schools or inspected and examined them very often as I have, it would be hardly possible to understand the depressing and discouraging effect of their small classes, and the want of animation and emulation among the children. I have no hesitation in saying that it would be much better for the future prospects of these Protestant pupils if they attended the large Catholic schools in their neighbourhood. There is not the slightest danger to their faith or morals. The Board's Rules, which are very strictly enforced, afford a complete safeguard.

S. E. STRONGE,

Senior Inspector of National Schools.

6th April, 1905.

Rule 127 (b).

MEMORANDUM OF MR. NAISH.

I. The financial effect of amalgamating the existing schools which are at present separate and have small attendances must be to increase the expenditure, thus :—

In numerous cases the men who are now eligible for Third Grade Salary only (maximum £77), will become eligible for promotion to, and increments in Second Grade (maximum £107). Many eligible now for Second Grade Salary only will become eligible for First Grade Salary, involving large increase—the maximum salary for Second Grade men being only £107 as against £175 maximum of First Grade. The number of cases in which men would still be confined through deficient average attendance to their present grades would be inconsiderable.

The present female teacher would be the assistant, and her present salary unreduced would have to be borne either by the Ireland Development Grant where the average attendance would be under sixty, or by the ordinary vote where the average attendance would be sixty or above.

Under the head of capitation payment the principal teacher will claim for himself an increased amount up to sixty units, and presumably the present female teacher will require to be guaranteed against the loss of capitation allowance to her in her new capacity of assistant consequent upon amalgamation. There will, therefore, be an increase of expenditure under this sub-head also.

Further, there will probably arise in many cases the claim for Bonus by the female teacher who will now be an assistant, and who as an assistant after a certain minimum of service will have a statutable right to Bonus which as a principal she is not entitled to at present.

In the matter of Monitors there will be a considerable increase in the number of schools with fifty in average attendance, giving rise to a claim for a Monitor's salary which does not at present exist.

The aggregate financial effect of amalgamating the small schools must, therefore, be to increase expenditure considerably.

II. If instead of simply amalgamating into one, a pair of existing schools which are separated according to sex and so extinguishing the second, a different idea of organisation be adopted, viz., to retain the two schools separate—having one of them Senior (mixed boys and girls) and the other Junior (mixed boys and girls)—the financial effect will still result in an increase in expenditure. For if in, say, 500 places this method of organisation be adopted, we should still have the two principal teachers as of old, with a claim created for 500 Manual Instructresses in the Mixed Schools under a master. A Manual Instructress costs about £20 a year and the resulting additional expenditure would be about £10,000.

(Signed),

R. NAISH.

[Extract from Treasury Letter of 14th March, 1905, to the Under Secretary.]

SUPERFLUOUS SCHOOLS.

My Lords are glad to observe that the Commissioners are taking up the question of amalgamating small schools and separate departments of schools where the attendance is insufficient to warrant the separate recognition of these departments. Their Lordships cannot but think that the facts set out in the paragraphs of Mr. Dale's Report under the head of "The multiplication of small schools" show that it should be possible to

do much in this direction, even if the number of schools in operation cannot be reduced, by as many as 2,000, to the number considered by the Powis Commission to be sufficient for a population more than 20 per cent. in excess of the present population of Ireland.

My Lords would particularly express a strong hope that the Commissioners will take steps for substituting mixed schools for separate schools for boys and girls, and combined girls' and infants' schools for separate schools for girls (senior, junior, and infant girls). It appears to Their Lordships that the remarks of Mr. Dale upon the gross extravagance and the great educational disadvantages resulting from the present over-subdivision should strengthen the Commissioners in taking this part of the subject vigorously in hand.

My Lords, for their part, are anxious to assist the Commissioners in their efforts to reduce the number of schools and departments of schools, and they are therefore willing to agree to an arrangement whereby the principal teachers of the schools proposed to be amalgamated may be recognised in the combined schools, one as principal and the other (or others) as assistant (or assistants), and such assistants may be secured from any reduction of salary in consequence of the re-organization of the schools, with the understanding, however, that the arrangement will be personal to the existing teachers, and, on the occurrence of a vacancy among the assistants, the incoming assistant will be subject to all the conditions as regards salary, average attendance, &c., specified in the existing rules.

At the same time My Lords cannot overlook the facts (1) that this personal arrangement in favour of existing teachers must postpone for some time the realization of any considerable saving by amalgamation, and (2) that, notwithstanding the appeal made by Their Lordships to the Board not to take into connexion any more schools with average attendance less than twenty-five, the number of such cases notified to the Treasury from time to time does not seem to have appreciably fallen off.

The Commissioners will therefore understand that the Treasury will not be able to sanction expenditure on new services put forward on the ground of anticipated savings to be effected by amalgamation, but must await the actual realization of such savings.

NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND).

RETURN to an Order of the Honourable the House of
Commons, dated 31st May, 1905 :—*for*,

COPY of Minutes of the Proceedings of the Com-
missioners of National Education relating to Rule
127 (b) of their Code of Regulations.

(*Mr. Walter Long.*)

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be printed,
31st May, 1905.

[*Price 2½d.*]